

# Indian Rose Annual - IRA 2002

## Roses in the Gardens of New Zealand and Australia

M. S. Viraraghavan and Girija Viraraghavan

David Ruston, one of Australia's, and indeed the world's, great rosarians as well as a flower arranger par excellence is fond of exclaiming "it is magic" when excited at seeing a beautiful rose or garden scene. We can think of no better word to describe the gardens of New Zealand and Australia, creations of fascinating beauty and perfection equalling, if not surpassing the more publicized gardens of Western Europe and USA.

Our visits to so many outstanding gardens organized by various Heritage Rose groups and Rhododendron Associations in the two countries, was the experience of a lifetime. It is difficult to do justice to the extraordinary diversity of these gardens or the remarkable enthusiasm and kindness with which we were shown around. But we will try.

Our introduction to the rose gardens of the Antipodes was, appropriately, with the Nancy Steen Heritage Rose Garden in Auckland, New Zealand. The late Nancy Steen was responsible for reviving the interest in heritage roses – roses that have stood the test of time – in New Zealand. Her book, "The Charm of Old Roses" is a 'must read' for every rosarian. This garden, opened in 1984, has over 200 old-fashioned and specie roses, laid out in the inimitable style popularized by her. We were a bit early, but were delighted with 'Nur Mahal' (dark coloured Hybrid Musk), the enchanting pink and yellow climbing Tea rose, 'Souvenir de Madame Leonie Viennot', 'Lady Hillingdon' and 'Cecile Brunner' (China polyantha). A semicircular white garden full of white roses and other plants demarcated one side of this fascinating place.

The next garden our Auckland hosts, Margaret and John Meyer took us to, was "Woodbridge" owned by a charming couple, Christine and Tony Peek. It was difficult to believe that their beautiful 10 acre country garden was hardly 10 years old. The colour coordination of plants with grey and silver foliage progressing to shades of blue and culminating in a grove of ash green olive trees approached through a path lined with lilac and grey lavender bushes showed that much thought had gone into the planning of the garden. The wealth of roses included a rare single yellow banksia (see Helga Brichet's article in this annual), the creamy yellow rambler Alberic Barbier growing profusely on a long screen, the salmon hybrid musk, Cornelia, 'Buff Beauty' (creamy yellow) and 'Sally Holmes' (cream). In the H.T. range we had the distinctive pale brown 'Julia's Rose' and McGredy's 'Auckland Metro' (white). 'Crepuscle' (apricot Noisette), 'Old Blush' (pink China) and the colour changing 'Mutabilis' were some of the other roses which drew the eye. The large water garden in front of the house was imaginatively landscaped with many rare plants.

"Ayrilies" is again a country garden described as "a garden for all seasons". It is incredible that such a huge garden could be so well managed by just two gardeners, supplemented by the owner, Beverley McConnell – a real tribute to the enthusiasm and dedication of the New Zealand gardener. Exquisite combinations of plants, lovely water gardens, a 'clear as glass' waterfall, streams and bog gardens made this an unique

garden. Under the shade of the tree lined slopes leading to the largest of the water gardens were rhododendrons in full bloom, set off by cymbidium orchids. Ayrli's range of roses included 'Leonie Viennot', 'Devonienses', 'Mrs. B.R. Cant', 'Mrs Herbert Stevens', 'Buff Beauty' and two seedlings therefrom. The climbing China, 'Pompon de Paris' grew up an arch. (see photograph). We felt nostalgic at seeing Bignonia (pyrostegia) Venusta, and the blue petrea climbing the walls of the low rambling house.

These were some of the gardens of the North Island we saw, which housed roses among other plants. We saw many other gardens which had mainly rhododendrons (though always with companion plantings) on our way to a rhododendron convention in New Plymouth. One such was John and Jill Burns near Dannevirke, where a plant of 'Amy Johnson' (Alister Clark) was in splendid bloom (see photograph). We travelled by ferry - a rather stormy crossing over Cooke Strait - to New Zealand's South Island where we had the privilege of staying with our good friends Sally and Bey Allison. Sally is one of the world's authorities on heritage roses, the author of several books and a much sought after speaker at the international level. Her "Lyddington Garden", near Christchurch, spread over more than 10 acres, has literally every variety of rose species, heritage roses as also a careful selection of moderns. Though the season was a bit early for roses, we were fascinated by the way in which they were displayed - in large island beds, in winding, meandering beds, in arches, in pergolas, as standards and on fences and, best of all, in a huge octagonal rose bower, built for Sally by Bey and their son Jonathan. We were delighted to see an enormous sprawling bush of one of the Stud Chinas - 'Park's Yellow Tea Scented China' - in full bloom (see photograph and Dr. Kalyan Chakraborty's article in Indian Rose Annual XI). The golden Chinese species, *R. xanthina* 'Canary Bird' and 'Archduke Joseph' (pink Tea) were also in good bloom. It is sad that we don't have the latter variety in India. It is impossible to do justice to a garden planted so extensively with such an unbelievable variety of roses, each lovingly tended and combined with appropriate companion plants. Verily a garden for the connoisseur.

Sally took us to "Brackenbank" - her friend Helen Russell's garden. You can understand our excitement at seeing the Alister Clark gigantea hybrids - 'Nancy Hayward' and 'Lorraine Lee' (both in shades of pink) in full bloom as well as a superlative specimen of the only yellow rugosa, 'Agnes'. The single shrub rose 'Golden Wings', 'Maréchal Niel' (the yellow Noisette we all know) and 'Tausendschön' (the polyantha 'Echo' is its sport) were also in good bloom. As elsewhere we were early, but we could envisage the marvelous spectacle this garden would present a few weeks later.

"Little Rose Gardens" at Cust, near Sally's, had over 1200 varieties in 2 acres of garden - oldfashioneds, Austins, patios, miniatures and species, all grown to an acme of perfection and displayed with skill. We regretted that we did not have a video camera to record how a nursery can be - to show it as a role model for Indian nurserymen!!

Our friends, Kathryn and Geoff Millar, who took us to many rhododendron parks and gardens, were keen to show us "Ohinetahi", the garden of a wellknown architect, Sir Miles Warren, near Christchurch. This was a garden in an entirely different mood-graciously formal with enclosures of pleached hornbeam trees. A dark red, almost black climbing Hybrid Tea, 'Birthday Present' climbed up a gazebo, many climbers grew up the verandah pillars, more formal rose beds surrounded the ornate house, and a spectacular planting of proteas from South Africa completed the picture. A highly sophisticated garden.

Moving over to Australia, the first garden we saw was appropriately enough the Rumsey Rose Garden at Parramatta, near Sydney. Appropriate because Viru was to give the first Rumsey Memorial Lecture at the Australian Heritage Conference at Hahndorf, in the Adelaide Hills. This garden, designed to reflect the interests of Roy and Heather

Rumsey in specie and heritage roses, had over 500 varieties. The China rose, 'Mutabilis' was impressive, with its fascinating colour changing habit - from pale orange and yellow to coppery pink to almost crimson as the flowers age, which feature has been carried forward in modern floribundas like 'Masquerade'. It is disappointing that 'Mutabilis' is not available in India though it would do well in our climates. The Noisettes, 'Lamarque' (white) and 'Crepuscle' were in good bloom. The fragrant white flowered 'Himalayan musk rose', *R. brunonii* was in tremendous bloom, as also many of the Teas – 'Rosette Delizy' (yellow and pink), 'Duchess du Brabant' (pale pink), 'Sombreuil' (white), 'Maman Cochet', 'Gloire de Dijon' (buff yellow), and the Hybrid Musks, 'Cornelia' and 'Felicia'. A very fitting memorial indeed.

The Heritage Rose Conference included visits to many rose gardens in the Adelaide area. The first one, "Cedars" (so named because of the many Himalayan cedars-deodars -planted) was the long time residence of one of Australia's most famous artists – Hans Heysen. The house, studio and garden are lovingly maintained by the Heysen family. Laid out in cottage garden style, the Bourbon, *vSouvenir de la Malmaison* (called 'Lavanir' in India) was of special note, as this clone avoided the problem common to this variety - of refusing to open in damp weather. Tall foxglove spikes and peony poppies were some of the other plants which set off the roses. A pink single rose, one of Alister Clark's unidentified ones was looking particularly beautiful.

At the Mt. Lofty Botanic Gardens nearby we observed a very carefully maintained selection of rose species, tended by horticulturist Tina Miljanovic, including the form of *R. gigantea* from Manipur (raised from seed sent by us sometime ago). The golden species, *R. foetida* (seen in Kashmir as also Western Asia), banksian roses and the heritage roses, 'Lady Hillingdon' (apricot) and 'Leonie Viennot' were full of flower.

Very different in approach were the plantings in Gail Barth and David Cartwright's garden with its extensive collection of herbs, Mediterranean shrubs (like cistus), iris and 200 specie and heritage roses. The charm of the garden was enhanced by its immaculate maintenance and the skilful groupings – gallicas, albas and bourbons together in beds, climbers on arbours, fences and house and outbuilding walls, and individual beds of hybrid musks, chinas, teas, hybrid perpetuals and species – clearly the result of Gail's experience as a horticultural scientist for many years.

A splendid garden was that of Jaensch and Stokes, and even the heavy rain did not deter us – a spectacular entrance arch with the red rambler 'Bloomfield Courage' and 'Clg. Peace' (see photograph) set the tone for the rest of the garden which had a superb collection of roses complemented by herbs, poppies, iris and other annuals – larkspur, marigold, nigella (love in the mist) to name a few. The bourbon, 'Mme Isaac Pereire' in deepest carmine bordered the verandah which had the orange climber 'Westerland', 'Renée' (pale pink) and that great rose of yesteryear, 'Ophelia' (which is in the background of many modern roses) climbing up its pillars. It was a revelation to learn that all this beauty had been achieved with basic organic methods and following the principles of 'no dig' cultivation, i.e. planting on a mixture of pea straw, and farmyard manure with lots of gypsum to lighten the hard clay below. No spraying is done. We have much to learn from this.

The next garden was equally marvelous - Al-Ru Farm extends over 5 acres and here too the problems of stone and hard clay soil have been tackled by using lots of mulch and cowdung manure. Rich coloured peony poppies were used with gay abandon everywhere. An arch of that modern rose with an oldfashioned look, 'Pierre de Ronsard' (pink and white) was the entrance to the main plantings of modern roses. 'Crepuscle' (apricot) and tall red sprays of *R. moyesii* made a striking combination. The Tea roses, 'Monsieur Tillier'

and 'Archduke Joseph' led to a lovely White Garden which had 'Clg. Devoniensis' and 'Lamarque'. Many unusual plants like the dragonlily (a close relative of the arisaemas) were used as companion plants.

We drove on to Chateau Barrosa, which is described as a “celebration of horticulture, architecture, music, theatre, wine and roses”. It was difficult to believe that we were in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the midst of such medieval splendour created by the immense chateau with its exquisite period furniture, crystal, china and other artifacts. An exciting display of wines, a wine museum and wine-tasting preceded our stroll through the rose garden - an amazing 25 acres of over 20,000 roses. No expense had been spared to make this rosarium one of the world's great gardens, with all the well known hybridisers represented by enormous plantings of their varieties – Meilland, Dickson, McGredy, Harkness, Tantau, Poulsen, Fryer and of course Australia's own Alister Clark. One of our conference friends, Lilia Weatherly, a breeder from Tasmania was delighted to see a bed of her variety, 'Pink Iceberg'. (see photograph). An innovative planting scheme had a perfumed rose bed, a nostalgia bed, a seduction lawn (roses with risqué names), and a tippler's bed (with 'Whisky', 'Brandy', etc)!!!. Altogether a rose garden fit for a queen – in fact the Queen of England was scheduled to formally open this garden in early October but the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> made her cancel her Australian visit.

Our next port of call was the paradise created by David Ruston at Renmark. This is Australia's, and perhaps the world's, largest rose garden with more than 50,000 bushes of 4000 varieties. Every type of rose was to be seen – H.T's, floribundas, climbers, miniatures and an assortment of oldfashioneds – gallicas, damasks, centifolias, mosses, bourbons, teas, noisettes, hybrid perpetuals, musks and rugosas. This incredible collection was set off by the many ornamental trees – cottonwood, red oak, magnolia, redwood, willow, ash, elm, as also flowering peach, pear, apple, plum, apricot, cherry and hawthorn. Further enhancing the impact were the swathes of iris, daylilies, watsonias, crinums, agapanthus and clivias. A Viewing Tower in the center of all this glory gave one a panoramic view of the entire garden. But the most amazing feature of all was the great man himself who knew and loved every one of the 4000 roses. Charming, knowledgeable and willing to share this knowledge with anyone interested, he personally looks after the irrigation of his vast domain, and with the aid of just a few helpers, picks and packs the rose flowers everyday for his nursery business and makes floral arrangements, big and small, for every variety of function, from weddings to funerals. More power to his elbow!

A very distinguished rose garden was that attached to Urrbrae House (in the foothills, south east of Adelaide) The garden has been planned to trace the history and development of roses from just before when the house was built - 1891. The present garden owes much to the efforts of the South Australia Chapter of the Heritage Roses of Australia. The Entrance Walk, a semi-circular path nearly 100 feet long is bordered with that lovely China, 'Cecile Brunner'. Many old teas – 'Betty Uprichard', 'Golden Dawn', 'Comtesse Vandal', 'Crimson Glory', 'Clg. Hadley' and 'Talisman' were grown well. An extensive pergola had, among others, 'Golden Showers' and 'Bloomfield Courage'. A bank of David Austin's 'Dapple Dawn' with pink single flowers in profusion made a charming sight.

The closing function of the conference was held in the display garden attached to Ross Roses. A steep slope leading to a level area was landscaped with roses from the most modern to the oldies – a treat for the eyes - and every plant grown to perfection and in full bloom. A long pergola of climbing roses, including the shell pink 'Belle Portugaise' and Alister Clark's 'Lorraine Lee' made a gay picture (see photograph) as did the many beds of Tea roses.

In Adelaide itself we visited two public gardens – the North Bank Heritage Rose Garden and the Adelaide International Rose Garden. The North Bank garden is located on the banks of the River Torrens and is comparatively new – since 1996. It has a fine heritage rose collection grown under the aegis of the Heritage Rose Group. The Adelaide International Rose Garden, part of the Botanic Garden is an exciting place with extensive displays of every kind of rose (see photograph) and charmingly framed by a curving hedge of the bright red climber, 'Dortmund'. The scientific arrangement into various classes as also the excellent standard of cultivation was both an educative and aesthetic experience.

After the close of the Heritage Conference we were the guests of the South Australia Rose Society, staying with Wendy and Merv Trimper. Merv is currently President of the Society. Their garden was a blaze of colour with many modern roses grown to a peak of perfection – all cars driving down their road stopped to admire the unbelievable display.

The climber 'Gold Bunny' was in stupendous form as also the McGredy raised red 'Dublin Bay' covering the garage wall. The focal point in the front garden was (once again) 'Bloomfield Courage' trained with the utmost skill as a weeping standard. We had caught the garden at its best - a few days hence was their Open Weekend when it would be opened to the public.

Another garden, lovingly tended in the cottage garden style was that of Pat and Roy Wilhelm. This garden overwhelmed you not with bright colour but with exquisite shadings of form and texture, of roses and companion plants, in pastel shades, ranging from short clumps to tall spired delphiniums. Pat informed us that the magnificent show was due to systematic mulching with manure without disturbing the soil.

From Adelaide our itinerary took us to Melbourne – the home of Alister Clark who, as we said earlier, hybridized with *R. gigantea* and therefore of special interest for us. We were keen to see as many of his roses as possible and in this endeavour we were ably helped by our hosts, Margaret and Tom Roberts and their son David. They cleverly devised a plan of action whereby we visited all Clark-related gardens in the space of a few days. Starting with the Royal Botanic Garden which has an interesting specie collection, including the 'gooseberry' rose – *R. stellata* var. *mirifica*, we next visited old rose enthusiast Diana Fickling's garden at Waverley. Her 'Francesca' (hybrid musk) was covered with flowers, as were many David Austin roses and Alister Clarks. Again, the combinations of roses in pastel colours were particularly appealing. (see photograph).

Victoria State Rose Garden at Werribee Park is beautifully landscaped. We visited it just after the Australian bred roses section had been opened and these made a glorious spectacle. A 400 metres long curving heritage rose border with 250 varieties encircled the Tudor rose design shaped beds of David Austin's English roses, modern H.T.'s, floribundas and climbers. The rows of standard and half standard roses were immaculate - the floribunda 'Brass Band' (apricot yellow) being a prime example. This huge garden is exclusively managed by the Victoria State Rose Garden Supporters, Werribee Park, a keen volunteer group. (See Bengal Rose Society's book, "Beautiful Rose Gardens Around the World" for more details)

We asked the two volunteers, Len Broadstock and Wal Johnston who showed us around, their favourite roses. Len's were 'Freisia', 'Rebell' (Kordes 1998), 'Elina' (Dickson) and Bridal Pink. Wal's list had Red Cedar (H.T., Kordes 1981, known here as Burgund), 'Pakeha' (cream H.T. of Australian breeder George Dawson), 'Rebell', 'Peacekeeper' (Harkness) and 'Elina'.

The search for more information on Clark roses led us to John Nieuwesteeg and his

nursery, which was on the grand scale and being readied for Open Weekend. Despite being very busy, John took us around the display garden and especially his Alister Clark collection. When asked about his favourites, he enumerated 'Graham Thomas' (David Austin), 'Mr. Lincoln', 'Apricot Nectar', 'Elina', 'Diamond Jubilee', 'Peter Frankenfeld', 'Blue Moon' and 'Lady Huntingfield' (Alister Clark yellow H.T.).

Margaret and Tom took us next to Laurie Newman's "Reliable Roses" nursery which is large and run almost single-handedly by him. He showed us a rose introduced by him and named 'Alister Clark' - a sport of a Clark rose, 'Marjorie Palmer'. Laurie liked the roses bred by the English hybridiser, LeGrice, who bred unusual coloured roses. We saw his 'Vesper' (orange brown) and 'Jocelyn' (dark reddish chocolate). Laurie's list of favourites included 'Pristine', 'My Choice', 'Tatiana', 'Honor' and 'The Doctor'. Laurie has India connections - his wife had emigrated from Kanpur/Lucknow.

We had to see the suburb of Bulla, where Clark's ancestral house Glenara is situated. The local municipal council and a band of enthusiastic volunteers led by Tid Alston, whose parents were close friends of the Clark family, have created a charming little jewel of a garden - the Alister Clark Memorial Garden. Many of the 'lost' Clark roses were refound in Tid's garden and have been planted here. 'Golden Vision' (*R. gigantea* x 'Maréchal Niel'), 'Nancy Hayward', 'Lady Huntingfield', 'Squatter's Dream' (clear yellow single *R. gigantea* shrub) 'Milkmaid', and many others, all carefully tended, are beautifully set off by edgings of shorter Clark roses, (like 'Borderer', salmon pink) lavender and heuchera (a dwarf perennial with sprays of white, pink or red flowers).

From Bulla we drove quite a distance through what was earlier 'gold country' - prosperous in the Gold Rush era, now abandoned and forlorn. But we saw a real rose gold mine in the nursery "Hilltop", run by Ian Huxley, which has a different sort of climate - very dry, frosts in winter, heat-waves in summer. This hillside garden was in fantastic bloom, the Tea/Noisettes being particularly profuse - 'Cloth of Gold' (yellow) and 'William Allan Richardson' (apricot). Sadly this latter variety which at one time grew in India is no longer available. *R. wilmutii* and *R. watsoniana*, a variant of multiflora with very different foliage were also notable.

Looking back, we are repeatedly amazed - and inspired - by the many rose gardens we had the pleasure of seeing. What marvelous results have been achieved with little help, but much enthusiasm, even in climates with very low rainfall. South Australia gets hardly 15 inches of rain in a year!!

The outstanding feature of all the gardens was the readiness to grow a wide range of roses as well as the aesthetic integration of roses into the general garden scene. There was hardly a garden where the roses were arranged in melancholy, stiff geometric formations as is the fashion in our country. Everywhere the use of roses as standards, as arches and climbers so that both horizontal and vertical aspects were taken into consideration, added greatly to the visual impact.

For the photographs see the "Copies of the original" below!

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**Climbing Pompon de Paris at "Ayrlires", near Auckland,  
New Zealand.**



**Park's Yellow Tea-scented China at Sally Allison's  
Lyddington garden, near Christchurch, New Zealand**



**Jill Burns in front of the climbing rose Amy Johnson  
(Alister Clark) at her house in Dannevirke,  
New Zealand.**



**Clg. Peace and rambler Bloomfield Courage at  
Jaensch & Stokes Garden, near Adelaide, South Australia.**

*Photos Courtesy : M.S. Viraraghavan*

yellow rambler Alberic Barbier growing profusely on a long screen, the salmon Hybrid Musk, Cornelia, Buff Beauty (creamy yellow) and Sally Holmes (cream). In the H.T. range we had the distinctive pale brown Julia's Rose and McGredy's Auckland Metro (white). Crepuscule (apricot Noisette), Old Blush (pink China) and the colour changing Mutabilis were some of the other roses which drew the eye. The large water garden in front of the house was imaginatively landscaped with many rare plants.

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A splendid garden was that of Jaensch and Stokes, and even the heavy rain did not deter us - a spectacular entrance arch with the red rambler Bloomfield Courage and Clg. Peace (see photograph) set the tone for the rest of the garden which had a superb collection of roses

complemented by herbs, poppies, iris and other annuals - larkspur, marigold, nigella (love in the mist) to name a few. The bourbon, Mme Isaac Pereire in deepest carmine bordered the verandah which had the orange climber Westerland, Renee (pale pink) and that great rose of yesteryear, Ophelia (which is in the background of many modern roses) climbing up its pillars. It was a revelation to learn that all this beauty had been achieved with basic organic methods and following the principles of 'no dig' cultivation, i.e. planting on a mixture of pea straw, and farmyard manure with lots of gypsum to lighten the hard clay below. No spraying is done. We have much to learn from this.

The next garden was equally marvelous - Al-Ru Farm extends over 5 acres and here too the problems of stone and hard clay soil have been tackled by using lots of mulch and cowdung manure. Rich coloured peony poppies were used with gay abandon everywhere. An arch of that modern rose with an oldfashioned look, Pierre de Ronsard (pink and white) was the entrance to the main plantings of modern roses. Crepuscule (apricot) and tall red sprays of R. moyesii made a striking combination. The Tea roses, Monsieur Tillier and Archduke Joseph led to a lovely White Garden which had Clg. Devoniensis and Lamarque. Many unusual plants like the dragonlily (a close relative of the arisaemas) were used as companion plants.

We drove on to Chateau Barrosa, which is described as a 'celebration of horticulture, architecture, music, theatre, wine and roses'. It was difficult to believe that we were in the 21st century in the midst of such medieval splendour created by the immense chateau with its exquisite period furniture, crystal, china and other artifacts. An exciting display of wines, a wine museum and wine-tasting preceded our stroll through the rose garden - an amazing 25 acres of over 20,000 roses. No expense had been spared to make this rosarium one of the world's great gardens, with all the well known hybridisers represented by enormous plantings of their varieties - Meilland, Dickson, McGredy, Harkness, Tantau, Poulsen, Fryer and of course Australia's own Alister Clark. One of our conference friends, Lilia Weatherly, a breeder from Tasmania was delighted to see a bed of her variety, Pink Iceberg (see photograph). An innovative planting scheme had a perfumed rose bed, a nostalgia bed, a seduction lawn (roses with risqué names), and a tippler's bed (with Whisky, Brandy, etc)!!! Altogether a rose garden fit for a queen - in fact the Queen of England was scheduled to formally open this garden in early October but the events of September 11th made her cancel her Australian visit.





**Clg. Helen Traubel with yellow Louisiana iris,  
at David Ruston's Renmark Garden**



**Clg. Lorraine Lee (Alister Clark) at  
Ross Roses Nursery, South Australia**

**Photos Courtesy : M.S. Vithayalathan**



**General view of rose beds in David Ruston's  
Renmark garden, South Australia.**



**Lilia Weatherly with her variety Pink Iceberg  
at Chateau Barrosa Garden, South Australia**

Photos Courtesy : M.S. Viraraghavan



Our next port of call was the paradise created by David Ruston at Renmark. This is Australia's, and perhaps the world's, largest rose garden with more than 50,000 bushes of 4000 varieties. Every type of rose was to be seen - H.T's, floribundas, climbers, miniatures and an assortment of oldfashioneds - gallicas, damasks, centifolias, mosses, bourbons, teas, noisettes, hybrid perpetuals, musks and rugosas. This incredible collection was set off by the many ornamental trees - cottonwood, red oak, magnolia, redwood, willow, ash, elm, as also flowering peach, pear, apple, plum, apricot, cherry and hawthorn. Further enhancing the impact were the swathes of iris, daylilies, watsonias, crinums, agapanthus and clivias. A Viewing Tower in the center of all this glory gave one a panoramic view of the entire garden. But the most amazing feature of all was the great man himself who knew and loved every one of the 4000 roses. Charming, knowledgeable and willing to share this knowledge with anyone interested, he personally looks after the irrigation of his vast domain, and with the aid of just a few helpers, picks and packs the rose flowers everyday for his nursery business, and makes floral arrangements, big and small, for every variety of function, from weddings to funerals. More power to his elbow!

A very distinguished rose garden was that attached to Urrbrae House (in the foothills, south east of Adelaide) The garden has been planned to trace the history and development of roses from just before when the house was built - 1891. The present garden owes much to the efforts of the South Australia Chapter of the Heritage Roses of Australia. The Entrance Walk, a semi-circular path nearly 100 feet long is bordered with that lovely China, Cecile Brunner. Many old Teas - Betty Uprichard, Golden Dawn, Comtesse Vandal, Crimson Glory, Clg. Hadley and Talisman were grown well. An extensive pergola had, among others, Golden Showers and Bloomfield Courage. A bank of David Austin's Dapple Dawn with pink single flowers in profusion made a charming sight.

The closing function of the conference was held in the display garden attached to Ross Roses. A steep slope leading to a level area was landscaped with roses from the most modern to the oldies - a treat for the eyes - and every plant grown to perfection and in full bloom. A long pergola of climbing roses, including the shell pink Belle Portugaise and Alister Clark's Lorraine Lee made a gay picture (see photograph) as did the many beds of Tea roses.

In Adelaide itself we visited two public gardens - the North Bank Heritage Rose Garden and the Adelaide International Rose Garden. The North Bank garden is located on the banks of the River Torrens and is comparatively new - since 1996. It has a fine heritage rose collection grown under the aegis of the Heritage Rose Group. The Adelaide International Rose Garden, part of the Botanic Garden, is an exciting place with extensive displays of every kind of rose (see photograph) and charmingly framed by a curving hedge of the bright red climber, Dortmund. The scientific arrangement into various classes as also the excellent standard of cultivation was both an educative and aesthetic experience.

After the close of the Heritage Conference we were the guests of the South Australia Rose Society, staying with Wendy and Merv Trimper. Merv is currently President of the Society. Their garden was a blaze of colour with many modern roses grown to a peak of perfection - all cars driving down their road stopped to admire the unbelievable display. (see photograph).

The climber Gold Bunny was in stupendous form as also the McGredy raised red Dublin Bay covering the garage wall. The focal point in the front garden was (once again) Bloomfield Courage trained with the utmost skill as a weeping standard. We had caught the garden at its best - a few days hence was their Open Weekend when it would be opened to the public.

Another garden, lovingly tended in the cottage garden style was that of Pat and Roy Wilhelm. This garden overwhelmed you not with bright colour but with exquisite shadings of form and texture, of roses and companion plants, in pastel shades, ranging from short clumps to tall spired delphiniums. Pat informed us that the magnificent show was due to systematic mulching with manure without disturbing the soil.

From Adelaide our itinerary took us to Melbourne - the home of Alister Clark who, as we said earlier, hybridized with *R. gigantea* and therefore of special interest for us. We were keen to see as many of his roses as possible and in this endeavour we were ably helped by our hosts, Margaret and Tom Roberts and their son David. They cleverly devised a plan of action whereby we visited all Clark-related gardens in the space of a few days. Starting with the Royal Botanic Garden which has an interesting specie collection, including the 'gooseberry' rose - *R. stellata* *mirifica*, we next visited old rose enthusiast Diana Fickling's garden at



**International Rose Garden, Adelaide, South Australia.**



**Garden of Wendy & Merv Trimper, Adelaide**

Photos Courtesy : M.S. Viraraghavan





**Diana Fickling's Garden at Waverley, near  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.**



**Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden, Bulla,  
near Melbourne.**

*Photos Courtesy : M.S. Viraraghavan*

Waverley. Her Francesca (Hybrid Musk) was covered with flowers, as were many David Austin roses and Alister Clarks. Again, the combinations of roses in pastel colours were particularly appealing (See photograph).

Victoria State Rose Garden at Werribee Park is beautifully landscaped. We visited it just after the Australian bred roses section had been opened and these made a glorious spectacle. A 400 metres long curving heritage rose border with 250 varieties encircled the Tudor rose design shaped beds of David Austin's English roses, modern H.T.'s, floribundas and climbers. The rows of standard and half standard roses were immaculate - the floribunda Brass Band (apricot yellow) being a prime example. This huge garden is exclusively managed by the Victoria State Rose Garden Supporters, Werribee Park, a keen volunteer group. (See Bengal Rose Society's book, "Beautiful Rose Gardens Around the World" for more details)

We asked the two volunteers, Len Broadstock and Wal Johnston who showed us around, their favourite roses. Len's were Freisia, Rebell (Kordes 1998), Elina (Dickson) and Bridal Pink. Wal's list had Red Cedar (H.T., Kordes 1981), known here as Burgund), Pakeha (cream H.T. of Australian breeder George Dawson), Rebell, Peacekeeper (Harkness) and Elina.

The search for more information on Clark roses led us to John Nieuwesteeg and his nursery, which was on the grand scale and being readied for Open Weekend. Despite being very busy, John took us around the display garden and especially his Alister Clark collection. When asked about his favourites, he enumerated Graham Thomas (David Austin), Mr. Lincoln, Apricot Nectar, Elina, Diamond Jubilee, Peter Frankenfeld, Blue Moon and Lady Huntingfield (Alister Clark yellow H.T.), Margaret and Tom took us next to Laurie Newman's "Reliable Roses" nursery which is large and run almost single-handedly by him. He showed us a rose introduced by him and named "Alister Clark" - a sport of a Clark rose, Marjorie Palmer. Laurie liked the roses bred by the English hybridiser, le Grice, who bred unusual coloured roses. We saw his Vesper (orange brown) and Jocelyn (dark reddish chocolate). Laurie's list of favourites included Pristine, My Choice, Tatiana, Honor and The Doctor. Laurie has India connections - his wife had emigrated from Kanpur/Lucknow.

We had to see the suburb of Bulla, where Clark's ancestral house Glenara is situated. The local municipal council and a band of enthusiastic volunteers led by Tid Alston, whose parents were close friends of the

Clark family, have created a charming little jewel of a garden - the Alister Clark Memorial Garden. Many of the 'lost' Clark roses were refound in Tid's garden and have been planted here. Golden Vision (R. gigantea x Marechal Neil), Nancy Hayward, Lady Huntingfield, Squatter's Dream (clear yellow single gigantea shrub) Milkmaid, and many others, all carefully tended, are beautifully set off by edgings of shorter Clark roses, (like Borderer, salmon pink) lavender and heuchara (a dwarf perennial with sprays of white, pink or red flowers.)

From Bulla we drove quite a distance through what was earlier 'gold country' - prosperous in the Gold Rush era, now abandoned and forlorn. But we saw a real rose gold mine in the nursery "Hilltop", run by Ian Huxley, which has a different sort of climate - very dry, frosts in winter, heat-waves in summer. This hillside garden was in fantastic bloom, the Tea/Noisettes being particularly profuse - Cloth of Gold (yellow) and William Allan Richardson (apricot). Sadly, this latter variety which at one time grew in India is no longer available. R. wilmotii and R. watsoniana, a variant of multiflora with very different foliage were also notable.

Looking back, we are repeatedly amazed - and inspired - by the many rose gardens we had the pleasure of seeing. What marvelous results have been achieved with little help, but much enthusiasm, even in climates with very low rainfall South Australia gets hardly 15 inches of rain in a year !!

The outstanding feature of all the gardens was the readiness to grow a wide range of roses as well as the aesthetic integration of roses into the general garden scene. There was hardly a garden where the roses were arranged in melancholy, stiff geometric formations as is the fashion in our country. Everywhere the use of roses as standards, as arches and climbers so that both horizontal and vertical aspects were taken into consideration, added greatly to the visual impact.





**Helga Bricbet and others in front of the giant bush of *R. banksiae normalis* in China. (Please see her article)**

Photo Courtesy : Helga Bricbet



**Mike Lowe- America's Tallest rose grower (:) and the first international member of IRE, at his nursery in New Hampshire, USA**

Photo Courtesy : M.S. Viramachayan